

Methodist the messenger

Rev. Dr. Grace G. Cajuat, Pastor

First United Methodist Church 7520 W. Lapham Street, West Allis, WI 53214

fumcwaoffice@fumcwa.org

414-774-5500

www.fumcwa.org

God cares about you



and so do we

FEBRUARY 2025



Members and friends of FUMCWA,

I went to Epworth by the Sea Methodist Center in Saint Simons Island, Georgia, for a conference in the middle of January. Chris and I landed in Savannah Hilton Head Airport and spent some days before and after the conference in Savannah. While there, we were astonished to find numerous sites commemorating John Wesley--a plaque outside the Anglican/Episcopal Christ Church and other buildings, a monument of him in

Reynolds Square, and others we missed. On Saint Simons Island, John's and Charles Wesley's historical markers were all over the island! I was geeking out! It felt like a pilgrimage to my story of faith. My faith, which keeps me going in the midst of living life filled with hard, easy, simple, and complicated times, is essential for me to be present within these times.

I understand our life together at First UMC as essential for nurturing our faith. As we go through the liturgical year from Advent to Easter to Pentecost to Transfiguration and back again to Advent, we learn our faith story grounded in the life of Jesus, a life that is alive and continuously evolving in how we see and live life as commissioned disciples called to transform the world.

We celebrated Jesus' birth, covenanted with God together as we began the new year, and reaffirmed our baptism. We remembered our vows to nurture one another and care for others inside and outside the church walls.

What a blessing that many of you have been a part of this faith community through many generations and have seen and experienced life in different stages together. It's a gift to grow with one another. Each of your faith stories informs and shapes the communal faith. This communal faith evolves as well as our community faces a different culture and needs of the nation, the state, the community, and our neighborhood. It is this evolution that gives us opportunities to understand and act on Jesus' teachings in different ways, approaches, decisions, and actions. Each one of us is a theologian and disciple equipped to change the world for good--where all are seen and heard and cared for.

John Wesley felt his time in Georgia was an utter failure. He didn't know how he changed the lives of the people in the colony. Maybe, like John Wesley, we won't know the impact of our discipleship, but in faith, we keep going, praying, and hoping to be a vessel of peace and love. I hope that we learn together as we pray, celebrate, and act together as agents of transformative change! That's worth geeking out on!

See you Sunday!

Pastor Grace

A NOTE FROM OUR LAY LEADER

I commented on Zechariah 14:9 at this time last year, and I will do it again this year.

The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name. (NIV)

God will be king over all the earth, one God and only one. What a Day that will be! (The Message)

It is the verse that is used for the principle of Tikkun Olam in Judaism, and studying that concept seems helpful to us in Christ's Church also.

Tikkun Olam (/ti'ku:n ʌ'la:m/; Hebrew: *tikún olám*, lit. 'repairing of the world') is a concept in Judaism, which refers to various forms of action intended to repair and improve the world.

In classical rabbinic literature, the phrase referred to legal enactments intended to preserve the social order. In the *Aleinu* prayer, it refers to the eradication of idolatry. In Lurianic Kabbalah, the "repair" is mystical: to return the sparks of Divine light to their source by means of ritual performance.

In the modern era, particularly among the post-Haskalah movements, *tikkun olam* has come to refer to the pursuit of social justice or "the establishment of Godly qualities throughout the world" based on the idea that "Jews bear responsibility not only for their own moral, spiritual, and material welfare but also for the welfare of society at large."

As we head toward Lent, it seems good to me to contemplate how we, as followers of Christ, improve this world. What are we called to do? What are the forms of idolatry in our lives that we need to put aside? What do we do today to pursue Godly qualities in our lives and throughout the world? What do we do in 2025 to pursue Social Justice for the welfare of our society?

I am praying for the eradication of our modern forms of idolatry. I pray especially for each of us to be filled by the Holy Spirit.

And for each of you and for me, I pray that we live a life full of Christ's love.

Tom Bolton, Lay Leader

414-704-5478 God loves you and so do we. Discipleship Never Ends.



The Church Financial Statement of Activities ending December 31, 2024:

	Year To Date Actual	Year To date Budget	Difference
Giving & Other Income	\$356,489.48	\$277,480.00	\$79,009.48
Expenses	\$383,173.65	\$458,656.25	\$75,482.26
Operating Income/ (Deficit)	\$(26,684.17)	\$(181,176.25)	

Our hope with prayers is that members will continue to give generously as we envision a better and brighter future with goals and strategies to keep FUMCWA healthy, growing, and vital. God cares about you and so do we. Thank you for your financial support to the life and the mission of FUMCWA.

Year-End Finance Summary From Richard Rinka, Finance Chair: In an attempt to keep everyone informed, I, on behalf of the Finance Committee, want to provide the congregation with a year-end summary of our finances. On Sunday, January 19th, the Chancel Choir sang "The Storm is Passing Over" for the Offertory. This seemed to fit with what I needed to say when discussing our recent financial struggles and where we are today. The lyrics from Charles Albert Tindley's are:

*Courage, my soul, and let us journey on,
Tho' the night is dark, it won't be very long.
Thanks be to God, the morning light appears,
And the storm is passing over, Hallelujah!*



First United Methodist Church of West Allis finished 2024 with our expenses exceeding our income by roughly \$27,000. This may not sound particularly good, but it is promising in relation to previous years. As a comparison, in 2022, our expenses exceeded our income by more than \$87,000. You may remember that I have noted that in 2022, for every dollar spent, we collected only 80 cents (*though the night is dark*). In 2024, that increased to almost 93 cents collected per dollar spent (*thanks be to God, the morning light appears*). This isn't ideal, but it does show that we are starting to make a comeback (*and the storm is passing over*).

We all need to be thankful for past and current members who have supported our church in 2024 and throughout the years. This includes those who had the vision to create reserve funds that have allowed us to work through our recent leaner times. As a congregation we have continued to fund our church's mission and contributions to the community. Please remember that the continued funding of church programs and missions is something that the Finance Committee is committed to supporting.

The continued financial success of First Church is something that we all have a part in. We should all be thankful for everything that is happening. We look forward to sharing better news in future years. (*Hallelujah!*)

Thank you for your past, present, and future support.



Stewardship Message From Joe Pitterle, Stewardship Chair: We have much to be thankful for when it comes to the generosity of our Church members! Thank you for financially supporting FUMCWA and closing the gap in our annual budget. While we are not quite to the point of covering all expenses, with income, we are getting close, the closest we have been in the past three years. This is a great reminder that stewardship is not just a campaign to run around the holidays or at specific parts of

the year. Stewardship can and should be practiced year-round! Speaking of year-round, your church committees and members work tirelessly throughout the year. In the last few years, Stewardship and Finance, with Pastor Sam and now Pastor Grace, with many volunteers, including our accounting team, worked hard to help provide a more real-time assessment of where we are financially. With this information, we can be more confident and timely with our requests moving forward. This said I believe we are at a point where we can have our incomes exceed the expenses and help secure the financial future of our church. This is crucially important for our ability to continue providing all the missions that we do. While we have reserves from years in the past, thanks to good stewardship, those will not last if we cannot reach a breakeven point here soon.

In the past, the church has had various outreaches to assist with planned giving (legacy and endowment giving) and financial well-being through workshops and small groups. I would ask any members who have ideas, requests, or questions to reach out to me regarding these topics. If there is any education we can provide that has not been offered or any questions you have, we'd love to discuss them with you. There are so many ways we can help align our own financial lives with our faith and commitment to FUMCWA. We want to reduce any barriers that may exist to help accomplish this together. Also, with tax returns on the horizon, now is a good time to see if there are any ways to maximize your giving here in 2025. Ask your accountant or your tax preparer if there are any additional ways they may see, for 2025, based on last year's return, that can help your taxes and the Church. God Bless!

Worship TOGETHER

SCRIPTURE READINGS & THEMES FEBRUARY 2025

February 2, 2025, Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

February 9, 2025, Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

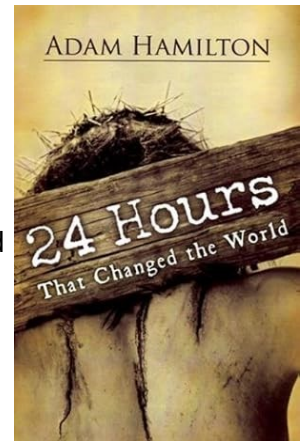
February 16, 2025, Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

February 23, 2025, Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

2025 Lenten Book Study: This year's Congregational Lenten Book Study will focus on **Adam Hamilton's book - 24 Hours That Changed the World**. In this popular, heartbreaking, and inspiring book, Hamilton guides us through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life, step by step. No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In this book, Hamilton will help us experience and understand the significance of Jesus' suffering and death like never before. He retraces the day that changed human history in his usual straightforward yet easy conversational style that speaks to both long-time Christians and those curious about Christ's crucifixion. This is a seven-week study with a video component. The Children's and Youth Sunday School classes will also study this book, which will follow the same study as adults (using age-appropriate lessons). Parents of Sunday School children are encouraged to join a class to enhance their children's studies and grow their faith.



Adult Class Opportunities:

Sunday School Class: Sunday (March 2-April 13) 9:00-10:00 am Leaders: Rev. Deacon Nancy Lanman and Sue Klescewski (Lighthouse Room)

Zoom Class: Tuesday (3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 4/8, 4/15) 7:00-8:00 pm Leader: Tom Bolton

Please contact the church office to register for the Zoom class. Copies of the book are available for sale in the church office. If possible, please read the first chapter before the class begins.



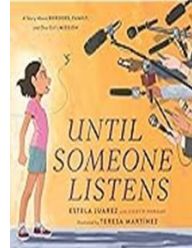
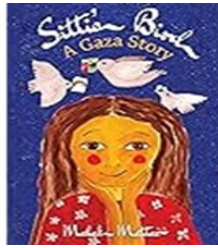
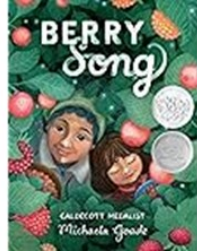
Looking Ahead:

March 2nd: Shrove Sunday Breakfast - 9-10 am - Small Dining Room: Please join your church family before worship as the Men's Group continues its traditional Shrove Breakfast.

March 5th: Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season. Please join us for scripture, song, and the imposition of ashes on Wednesday, March 5th. The Ash Wednesday Service will be at 7:00 pm.

FUMCWA MINISTRIES

Church Library Ministry (The Bernice Nailen Memorial Library): Your Church Library invites you to explore the children's section of your library. The winter season is a great time to spend reading together as a family. Explore titles such as these: *Berry Song* by Michaela Goade; *Sitti's Bird: a Gaza Story* by Malak Mattar; *Until Someone Listens: A Story About Borders, Family and One Girl's Mission* by Estela Juarez.



Food Pantry Ministry: We still need large paper grocery bags with handles and red Sendik's bags. The colder weather has brought our numbers down, but we hope it will get better soon, as it is hard for those who need to walk to brave the elements. Food items especially needed in this weather are chunky soups, stews, chili (with or without beans), canned pasta, pasta or rice sides, and all varieties of crackers.

Personal care items needed are deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, and hand lotions. Household items needed are laundry detergent, liquid hand soap, dish detergent, disinfectant spray cleaners, foil, plastic wrap, and Kleenex.

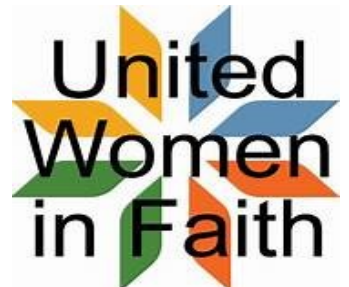
Thank you for all the monetary donations, large and small, as we are grateful for every penny! We want to thank Sue Stachelski and family for the wonderful donation they gave for the purchase of food items for our pantry. We are truly blessed by this congregation.

The January Good Samaritan Offering: \$231.00

PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED FOR FEBRUARY:

KETCHUP AND DEODORANT

United Women in Faith: Please join us for a new year of programming for United Women in Faith (Unity Circle). Our first meeting for 2025 will take place on Monday, February 10th, at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Room. It will be a time of fellowship and fun as we gather to nurture, share, and learn about one another and ourselves. You are all important and have a voice. We welcome suggestions from you about the programs you are interested in. We want to be a support for one another in our faith journeys. We hope to see you on February 10th. If you have any questions about our group, please call Annette Intravaia (414-257-4166).



Laurie Halvorsen, Senior Ministries Coordinator: On January 15th Senior League celebrated the beginning of the Senior group that started in our church 50 years ago on January 16, 1975. Forty-eight people attended and all received a keyring flashlight as a special surprise gift. January 28, 1975 officially was the first Senior meeting, and for lunch they had a chicken dinner for \$1.35. The name "Senior League" came years later.



Our 50th Anniversary Party Celebration will be on June 4, 2025, at Noon. The Program will be the Caribbean Eclipse, and the Steel Drum Band will perform. Save the Date for a Great Party!!!

Come join Senior League in its 50th Year for Fun, Food, and Fellowship, and bring a friend in 2025!

Meetings in February

February 5 12 Noon- Baked Ziti, Salad, Cheesy Garlic Bread, Spumoni

Program: Attorney Nathan Eckley; Wills, Trusts & Probate

Devotions: Richard Lierman

February 19 12 Noon- Tator Tot Sausage Casserole, Veggie Tray, Cookies

Program: Remember When; Debi & Mark Vocal Duo

Devotions: Julie Bryson

Fireside Coach Trip: Friday, March 21st "West Side Story" Cost is \$110.00, including gratuity, and is open to EVERYONE!

Reservations are required and needed by February 19th! Leave Franklin at 9:00 am and FUMC at 9:30 am.

Senior League Chef Needed: At the end of December 2025, we will be looking for a new chef as our current Senior League Chefs step down. Responsibilities include menu planning, shopping, meal preparation, and clean-up. Training will be provided. Senior League meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month from noon to 2 pm. If you have culinary skills or know someone who does, please contact Laurie at First United Methodist Church of West Allis, 7520 West Lapham St., at 414-774-5500.

FUMCWA LOCAL MISSIONS



February, a month dedicated to showing love, gives us the perfect opportunity to bake hot breakfast casseroles for our hungry neighbors. Please bring your hot dish to the church kitchen by 7:45 am on Saturday, February 8th. You can also deliver your baked creations to the church during office hours and store them in the white fridge to be reheated by our volunteer servers. Thank you all for your support!

The Fill the Stocking Advent Mission Project provided new socks for the Divine Intervention Sleep Shelter in Bay View, food pantry guests, Morning Glory guests, Good Samaritan guests in West Allis, residents at the Rooted and Rising Methodist residence in Milwaukee, Joy House for Women, and the Milwaukee Rescue Mission. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by many men, women, and children. Special thanks to Tom Bolton, Eric Kempka, Michelle Fuller, and Jenny Rutter for delivering the socks to the locations listed.

February Coins of Love will support The Street Angels shower fund. The Shower Truck provides dignity on wheels. Many do not think twice about hopping in the shower, but for some, this luxury can make a world of difference. This resource will be available to those living without shelter or simply cannot afford their utility bills.

December's Coins of Love - Homeless of West Allis \$517.56

January's Coins of Love - Repairers of the Breach \$312.00



FUMCWA CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Book Discussion Group: This month's book discussion is on Monday, February 17th, at 1:30 pm, when we will discuss – ***We Are Not Here to be Bystanders: A Memoir of Love and Resistance*** by Linda Sarsour (Leadership Development). This powerful memoir from the co-organizer of the Women's March, shares how growing up Palestinian Muslim American, feminist, and empowered moved her to become a globally recognized activist on behalf of marginalized communities across the country. From the Brooklyn bodega her father owned, where Linda learned the real meaning of intersectionality, to protests in the streets of Washington, D.C., her experience is a moving portrayal of what it means to find one's voice and use it for the good of others. The group meets in the church library and is open to everyone who enjoys reading!

FUMCWA EVENTS

Lance Lambert / Events Coordinator:

Souper Bowl of Caring - Soup Tasting - Sunday, February 9th: Join us after worship in the Small Dining Room to enjoy sampling soups and fellowship. This Youth Led Mission Project started with a simple prayer in 1990 by Rev. Brad Smith at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church of Columbia, SC... *"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat."* 22 churches raised \$5,700.00 that first year. Since then, more than \$193 million has been raised to support local food ministries. We have participated for several years here at 1st Church. This year, we are supporting our own church's Food Pantry. Bring cans of soup to the pots in the Narthex and cash donations to the tasting on the 9th or to the Church Office. If you are able to make and bring a Crock Pot/Nesco of soup to the tasting, please let Lance know by February 5th. *Let's have a record year in 2025 and help our neighbors in need!!!*



Methodist Movie Matinee /Discussion - Sunday, February 16th: We're going to keep the "Animation Train" rolling by watching the new Dreamwork film *"Wild Robot"* in the sanctuary. Roz, the robot, is shipwrecked on an uninhabited island and must adapt to the harsh surroundings. He starts building relationships with the island's animals. This is a powerful story about self-discovery, examining the bridge between tech and nature, and exploring what it means to be alive and connect to all living things. Young ones will enjoy the animation, and adults will appreciate the message. *Film, popcorn & beverages are FREE!* Stay for pizza & a brief discussion afterward. A free-will offering will be taken to defray the cost of the pizzas.

Towels for Dogs (& Cats)-Ongoing Ministry: Thanks to those who have brought old, frayed, or torn towels to the basket in the donation alcove of the Narthex. Your early generosity is impressive! As I said last month, I will take the towels to an area animal shelter as they accrue to be used in cleaning and caring for the animals they take in. Please continue to support this outreach! This need will always be there.

FUMCWA FAITH COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS



~Thank you all for the prayers and cards. I know that they worked, my neck is healing. Brian Wang

~Thank you for your cards, thoughts, and prayers during my recent hospital stay and recovery. I am blessed to be part of our wonderful church family.
Dorothy Thoms

Our Prayer Chain Team connects us through prayer. To join this ministry, contact the church office. You'll receive prayer requests via email and be asked to pray for them daily. **Submit prayer requests** by contacting the church office. Updates on prayer requests are also welcomed.



Recycle Socks and Raise Funds for Northcott Neighborhood House: We will continue collecting holey socks for a spring shipment. Please help us spread the word to your neighbors and co-workers, encouraging them to clean their sock drawers and upcycle their old socks. The funds raised will support local employment training programs at the Methodist Church. Thank you!

God wants to use you to make a difference. God has given you unique talents and abilities to build His kingdom. Serving is the best way to discover and develop these gifts and connect with others who will bless them. There are many opportunities to get involved at First Church. We have opportunities for every personality, skill set, season, and schedule. Here are just a few ways you can get involved and begin to discover what God can do through you:

Gather/Grow. Watch your faith grow through investing in relationships with people who want to learn and grow with you. Adult Opportunities to Grow – Book study groups, Seasonal Small Group Studies, Adult Sunday School classes.

Serve. There are numerous opportunities for you to volunteer in big and small ways that can make a huge impact. We are always looking for those who wish to serve through tech assistance, volunteering as ushers, greeters, and liturgists, joining the choir or bell choir, attending community outreach events, or participating in missions.

Give. Whether you give your time, talents, and treasure or donate supplies, giving is a great way to get involved at First Church and see God's promises fulfilled through your generosity. If you're not sure where to start or have any questions about getting involved, contact Pastor Grace today and she will help you take the next step in serving.

